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Sustainable development: International Strategy for Disaster Reduction

Implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report provides an overview of progress on the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction in response to General Assembly resolution 66/199. Pursuant to resolution 65/158, an update on international cooperation to reduce the impact of the El Niño phenomenon is contained in the annex.

While 133 Governments have reported on their progress in implementing the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters, significant loss of life and new record economic losses in 2011 underline the importance of agreeing on a successor to the Hyogo Framework for Action in 2015. Following the call by Member States at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development for these issues to be addressed with a renewed sense of urgency, we are now on the cusp of a major breakthrough in mainstreaming disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation across the sustainable development agenda.

Successive editions of the *Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction* have made an unassailable business case for investment in disaster risk reduction as an essential element in the fight against poverty worldwide and as a means of stemming the wasteful losses from recurring disaster events. The present report highlights that there are many positives to build on, including the growing number of national disaster loss databases around the world, the solid success of the World Disaster Reduction Campaign on the theme "Making cities resilient" and the renewed emphasis on tracking donor investment in disaster risk reduction and ensuring an evidence-based approach to investment in disaster management based on simple need.

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I. Trends in disasters and disaster risks

1. The cumulative impact of disasters represents significant lost opportunities for human development. Since 1992, when the international community first met to discuss sustainable development at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, more than 4.4 billion people have been affected in internationally reported disasters, a total of $2 trillion, or an estimated 25 years of total overseas development aid, in damages has been incurred and more than 1.3 million lives have been lost.

2. These figures provide only a partial glimpse of disaster impacts. The losses caused by smaller-scale flooding, localized landslides, storms and fires are not accounted for internationally. However, they directly affect highly vulnerable urban and rural communities and the infrastructure and facilities on which those communities depend. In Colombia alone, the 2010-2011 rainy season was responsible for an estimated loss of $5.4 billion. Many other countries, including Australia, Brazil, Mozambique, Namibia, Papua New Guinea and Sri Lanka, were also affected by extensive, and in many cases record-breaking, floods during the reporting period. Recurrent flooding in Pakistan, triggered by torrential monsoon rains, affected more than 9.2 million people in 2011. Fiji sustained repeated floods in January and April 2012. Northern Mindanao, in the Philippines, was struck by Tropical Storm Washi, resulting in flooding and landslides that affected 624,600 people, causing 1,495 deaths and destroying nearly 40,000 homes.

3. In 2011, internationally reported droughts affected almost 75 million people worldwide,[1] resulting in agricultural losses, food insecurity and famine among vulnerable populations. In the Horn of Africa, drought affected more than 13 million people. In the Sahel, early warnings were issued, following worsening drought conditions further complicated by political instability.

4. At the same time, the earthquake and tsunami that occurred in Japan in March 2011 and the floods that affected Thailand later that year highlighted that major disasters not only caused direct and indirect losses to the gross domestic product (GDP) but could also interrupt global supply chains in such sectors as the automotive and electronics industries. The interconnected supply chains of a globalized world means that economic losses sustained in one region have global reverberations. It is estimated, for example, that the floods in Thailand set back global industrial production by 2.5 per cent. The earthquakes and aftershocks that occurred in May 2012 in Emilia Romagna, Italy, an area in which small and medium-scale industries are concentrated, caused a combined economic loss estimated at over $6 billion.[2]

5. Disasters are not isolated, contextual events but are indicators of ongoing processes of risk accumulation. A special report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change[3] highlighted that, as a result of climate change, the frequency of heavy precipitation events would likely increase in the twenty-first century over many regions and increases in the frequency of warm daily temperature extremes

[1] EM-DAT: the OFDA/CRED International Disaster Database.

[2] Impact Forecasting, "May 2012 global catastrophe recap". Available from http://thoughtleadership.aonbenfield.com/Documents/201206_if_monthly_cat_recap_may.pdf.

[3] Christopher B. Field and others, eds., *Managing the Risks of Extreme Events and Disasters to Advance Climate Change Adaptation* (New York, Cambridge University Press, 2012). Available from http://ipcc-wg2.gov/SREX.

and decreases in cold extremes would occur on a global scale. Heat waves will very likely increase in length, frequency and/or intensity over most land areas, as will the average maximum wind speed of tropical cyclones in many ocean basins. Climate change, therefore, will increase risks in many weather-sensitive sectors, such as water and agriculture.

6. At the same time, the special report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change echoed the findings of the *2011 Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction* that the principal driver of increasing disaster risk in the coming decades will continue to be the growing exposure of people and economic activities to natural hazards. The risk to both public and private investments continues to be concentrated in hazard-prone areas, such as flood plains, storm- and tsunami-prone coastlines and earthquake-prone cities. Much of such investment occurs in areas exposed to hazards in low- and middle-income countries. Accompanying processes of inadequately planned and managed urbanization and environmental degradation mean that the risks represent a hidden deficit not only for national Governments and the global private sector but also, and most importantly, for the people who depend on both.

II. Challenges and opportunities associated with the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action

7. The past year has seen both critical challenges to the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters and new opportunities to accelerate it.[4] The rapidly growing levels of disaster risk and the lack of accurate disaster loss data and insufficient resources at the local level, as well as of adequate integration of disaster risk reduction considerations into development, planning and budgets, remain the major challenges. On the other hand, the recognition of disaster risk reduction in the outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (resolution 66/288, annex) and the summits of the Group of 20 and the untapped potential of private sector and local governments represent new opportunities to further build the resilience of nations and communities to disasters by 2015.

8. The 2009-2011 review of progress against the Hyogo Framework for Action highlighted that while many countries were making good progress in life-saving activities, such as disaster preparedness and response and early warning, disaster risk was not being adequately factored into investment and development decisions. Despite notable exceptions, such as in Peru, public planning and investment decisions are largely unconnected to policies and strategies to manage and reduce disaster risks. At the same time, countries report difficulties in bringing legislation and policy to bear on the ground. Weak capacity in many local governments and ineffective mechanisms of accountability mean that even where countries have developed policies and legislative and institutional systems for disaster risk reduction, they are challenged to address risk accumulation on the ground.

9. In the coming decades, trillions of dollars of new investment will pour into hazard-exposed low- and middle-income countries. How and where this investment

[4] See the midterm review of the Hyogo Framework for Action, available from www.unisdr.org/files/18197_midterm.pdf.

is made will be the principal determinant of whether disaster risk continues to grow in the future. While international financial institutions support Governments in ensuring that risk-financing mechanisms to manage contingencies are in place, this is not enough. The disasters that occurred in Japan and Thailand in 2011 have highlighted the impact when risks hidden in development are externalized. A sustainable global future will depend on the public and private sector working together to ensure that the risks in all new investment are properly accounted for and managed.

10. In my previous report to the General Assembly (A/66/301), I called for any future framework for sustainable development to include a clear prescription for incorporating disaster and climate risk management. The outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), entitled "The future we want" (General Assembly resolution 66/288, annex), clearly heeds my call and provides a number of important opportunities and intergovernmental processes in which disaster risk reduction, including prevention, can concretely support the achievement of sustainable development objectives and more resilient communities. The outcome of the Conference is a solid foundation for discussions and a road map towards a post-2015 disaster risk reduction framework.

11. The Conference participants stressed the need for continued and enhanced efforts to assist small island developing States in implementing the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation. The multiple ongoing and emerging challenges require coordinated and sustained support. Addressing the underlying causes of vulnerability and building resilience to risk are central in achieving sustainable development and will require a coordinated system-wide approach. A third international conference on small island developing States to be held in 2014 is therefore a crucial milestone to ensure the support necessary to increase the resilience of small island developing States.

12. Gathering data on and systematically accounting for disaster losses is fundamental to building the evidence necessary for the development of prevention policies and programmes and therefore crucial for a full understanding of the economic impact of disasters and the ways in which fiscal instruments can ease the burden on Governments and private organizations. While some progress has been noted over the past year, it is recommended that further work in this area remain a high priority. Nations need to establish accounting systems capable of recording local losses and sharing information between the local and national levels for planning and statistical purposes. In the context of the development of a disaster loss accounting system, a certain degree of standardization may help to better account for losses at the regional level and to support the further development of regional cooperation. A total of 43 States have reported the existence of an updated national disaster loss database, which can inform investment decisions, address underlying risks, strengthen local risk governance and increase partnerships and civil society engagement.

13. Despite the multiple challenges, there are many opportunities to further accelerate disaster risk reduction in various sectors. The Strategy secretariat has engaged with a range of actors and change agents to ensure that reducing disaster risk and building resilience become part of daily decision-making in the business sector and at the local level.

14. In most countries, private sector investment represents a high share of the overall investment. Public investments normally represent only 5 to 15 per cent of a country's GDP, implying that private sector investments are responsible for the other 85 to 95 per cent. Therefore, national economic development and resilience to disasters depend on disaster risk-sensitive investment by the private sector. The Strategy secretariat has increased engagement with private sector entities with the aim of motivating business continuity planning and investment in resilient infrastructure and processes. As a result, there is now a growing global network of private sector entities[5] that share an interest in building resilience and aim to exchange knowledge and experiences and collaborate on initiatives.

15. The aim of the Strategy secretariat is to connect with companies in order to convince them to integrate in their business strategy and operations the five essentials for business in disaster risk reduction presented at the third session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, held in 2011. A private sector advisory group to the Assistant Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction and Special Representative for the Implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action is engaging with businesses globally and is committed to supporting Governments and world leaders in disseminating and implementing the following measures: developing and supporting local and national governments' risk assessment; cooperating with multiple partners to prioritize resilience in land-use planning and design; and ensuring that investments are resilient to the impact of extreme climatic events and new risks presented by rapid urbanization, such as stress to ecosystem services and natural resources and governance challenges.

16. Half of humanity is now living in urban centres. By 2050, 70 per cent of the world's population is expected to live in urban areas, two thirds of this in low- and middle-income nations. Much of this growth is taking place in locations already prone to earthquakes, droughts and floods. Nevertheless, urban centres have the resources, knowledge and economies of scale necessary to address the risks. The critical role that local administrations can play in reducing disaster risk remains largely undervalued and underresourced. A lack of capacity and understanding of the issues and resources has been identified as the main stumbling block to making cities more resilient. However, many city leaders understand the benefits of prioritizing disaster risk reduction as part of their political and sustainable development agenda. The "Making cities resilient" campaign seeks to support sustainable urbanization by promoting resilience activities, increasing local-level understanding of disaster risk and encouraging commitments by local and national governments to prioritize disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation.

17. Building societies that are resilient to disasters requires a comprehensive approach, including the continuous assessment and management of emerging risks, in partnership with the private sector and local governments. Disaster loss databases, disaster risk mapping and financial tracking systems can support both public and private decision makers across all levels in making evidence-based development planning and investment choices.

18. In preparation for the development of future sustainable development and risk reduction frameworks and in order to further advance international cooperation in reducing disaster risk, countries need to take stock of progress in the development

[5] The disaster risk reduction private sector partnership includes some 40 private sector partners.

of national prevention and risk reduction policies and plans and identify gaps and challenges, as well as possible solutions. The fourth session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, which will be held in Geneva from 19 to 23 May 2013, is a major forum in which countries can share some of the lessons and ideas for the future and identify ways to maximize the opportunities presented by the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development to integrate disaster risk reduction into sustainable development.

III. Coordination and guidance to accelerate disaster risk reduction

19. The Strategy secretariat continues to build on existing mechanisms, such as the global, regional and national platforms for disaster risk reduction, while seeking innovative ways to engage with new stakeholders in order to reach out to all sectors of society.

A. Strengthening coordination at the global level

Towards a post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction

20. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 66/199, the Strategy secretariat began facilitating the development of a post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction. The secretariat will ensure that the process is consultative and draws from the findings and recommendations in the midterm review of the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters[6] and the editions of the *Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction*[7] and from previous sessions of the global and regional platforms for disaster risk reduction. On the basis of those findings and other inputs, the Strategy secretariat released a background paper[8] outlining elements of the process towards the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction.

21. A series of preliminary consultations took place early in 2012, and plans for significantly more consultations are scheduled in the coming year, with a view to ensuring as wide a range of stakeholders as possible to feed into the discussions and process. The recent World Ministerial Conference on Disaster Reduction, held in Tohoku, Japan, on 3 and 4 July 2012, also provided an opportunity for countries to discuss the requirements for the future disaster risk reduction framework. At the Conference, the challenges in managing disaster risks in an interconnected world were highlighted, as was the need to fully empower communities and ensure that their knowledge and experience are fully used in planning and crisis management.

22. One of the building blocks of the process leading to the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction will be the upcoming fourth session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, which will provide an opportunity to take stock of the first period of consultations and refine the next steps of the process. The aim of the fourth session is to continue the momentum for durable and sustained

[6] Available from www.unisdr.org/files/18197_midterm.pdf.

[7] Available from www.preventionweb.net/gar.

[8] Available from www.unisdr.org/we/inform/publications/25129.

effort by all actors to take shared responsibility in reducing risks and reinforcing resilience in communities. Preparations are advancing well, with particular focus on local governments and cities, the private sector, parliamentarians and academic and science networks during the pre-session consultations.

23. It is expected that the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction will be adopted at the World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Japan early in 2015. The Strategy secretariat will support the organization of the Conference. I have requested the Strategy secretariat to closely consult with Member States and other stakeholders on the preparations for and deliberations at the Conference, while taking into account other processes focused on the future sustainable development agenda, including the sustainable development goals.

Disaster risk reduction in the United Nations system

24. At the start of my second term as Secretary-General, I identified disaster prevention as one of my five priorities. I called for the development and implementation of national disaster risk reduction plans that address the growing challenges of climate change, environmental degradation, urbanization and population growth, and for special emphasis to be placed on the least developed and most vulnerable countries. For this to be achieved, the United Nations system, led at the country level by resident coordinators and supported by the United Nations Development Group, must draw on the "Delivering as one" principles and capitalize on the strengths and comparative advantages of the different members of the United Nations system through coherent and coordinated engagement.

25. In accordance with resolution 66/199, my Special Representative and the Strategy secretariat have worked closely with the United Nations coordination bodies, such as the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) and the High-level Committee on Programmes, on delivering as one in supporting Member States with a view to accelerating progress in disaster risk reduction.

26. At the request of CEB, my Special Representative gave a briefing at its first regular session for 2011. At that session, it was agreed to commit to a coherent approach to mainstreaming disaster risk reduction in programmes and operations through the development of a common agenda and to give disaster risk reduction the highest political support. The Strategy secretariat was asked to lead this exercise. On the basis of the results of a self-assessment exercise, the High-level Committee on Programmes decided to establish a senior-level, time-bound working group, facilitated by my Special Representative, to develop a strategic plan of action to ensure the highest possible degree of coherence and effectiveness of the United Nations system in the field of disaster risk reduction. A total of 28 United Nations system organizations, funds, programmes and specialized agencies, including the World Bank, participate in the working group, which is expected to deliver results by mid-2013.

27. The self-assessment revealed that 90 per cent of respondents considered disaster risk reduction either an institutional priority or a part of their approach. More than 60 per cent of respondents highlighted significant progress towards mainstreaming disaster risk reduction across their programmes. This includes a policy on disaster risk reduction and management approved by the Executive Board of the World Food Programme and a framework programme on disaster risk

reduction for food and nutrition security established by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. Similarly, the World Meteorological Organization has set disaster risk reduction as one of its five strategic priorities under its strategic plan for 2012-2015. The Governing Council of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, at its 2011 session, also provided clear direction on disaster risk reduction, preparedness, prevention and mitigation as its contribution to sustainable urban development.

Monitoring progress on risk trends

28. The Hyogo Framework for Action is an invaluable instrument for advancing the disaster risk reduction agenda worldwide. The biennial global and regional platforms serve as the main mechanisms to monitor progress in implementing the Framework at the global and regional levels. At the national level, by 2011, 133 countries had used the National HFA Monitor, an online tool hosted on PreventionWeb (www.preventionweb.net) to capture information on progress in implementing the five priority areas of the Framework. During the reporting period, a guidance note entitled "A practical guide to national HFA monitoring and review through a multi-stakeholder engagement process 2011-2013" was made available. The review process is a tool for self-assessment and benchmarking and a planning tool for national Governments. At the regional and subregional levels, the Regional HFA Monitor is an online tool introduced in 2010 to improve understanding of transboundary issues concerning disaster risk reduction and identify gaps and challenges. There are now 11 intergovernmental organizations participating in the subregional Hyogo Framework for Action progress review. The Local Government Self-Assessment Tool was piloted in 2011 and seeks to gather information at the local or municipal level. These tools enable all stakeholders to be a part of the process and ensure a degree of accountability and transparency. They enable everyone from policymakers to community leaders to track progress and identify gaps.

29. Disaster risk information plays a critical role in guiding investment decisions and supporting public opinion. In order to increase access to global risk data, the Strategy secretariat produces the *Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction*[7] in collaboration with a wide range of partners. The *Global Assessment Report* is now established as a credible global source for the analysis of hazard risks and vulnerability trends and of progress in disaster risk reduction. A total of 30 national and regional launches of the *2011 Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction* were supported by the Strategy secretariat.

30. In response to the discussion and analysis of how private investment is a driver of disaster risk and how the resulting disaster impacts negatively affect not only the businesses themselves but also the economies and societies from which they operate, the *2013 Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction* will include the incentives and disincentives for managing disaster risks in investment decisions, particularly in the current context of global political and economic crises, concatenated risks and uncertainty. The relationship between private investment and disaster risk works in both directions: private investment can be negatively affected by disasters, but it can also generate or increase disaster risks. The *2013 Global Assessment Report* will be launched at the fourth session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, to be held in 2013.

31. An independent evaluation[9] of PreventionWeb was undertaken to assess its effectiveness, impact and ability to meet the current and evolving information needs of existing and potential disaster risk reduction stakeholders. The evaluation found that PreventionWeb had established itself as the repository for information on disaster risk reduction globally. It provides a comprehensive range of resources for a broad user constituency. With more than 25,000 disaster risk professionals visiting the website weekly, the Strategy secretariat is committed to strengthening this globally important store of knowledge for the disaster risk reduction community.

32. The role of public-private partnerships in the area of risk monitoring continues to gain strength. The Global Earthquake Model (www.globalquakemodel.org) is a collaborative effort to develop and deploy tools and resources for earthquake risk assessment worldwide. Similarly, the Financial Impact of Global Shocks, a multi-year initiative of the World Economic Forum, focuses on the economic and humanitarian risks posed by natural hazards and provides a unique global reference for actions and best practices that public and private sector stakeholders can leverage.

Advocating for disaster-resilient cities, schools and hospitals

33. The importance of disaster risk awareness in making the difference between life and death was once again highlighted during the earthquake in eastern Japan. In general, people who are aware of their risks and know what to do are more likely to survive in a disaster. The role of global, national and local leaders in advocating for disaster risk reduction is crucial. In this regard, the Strategy secretariat has increased its engagement with a number of agents of change, such as parliamentarians, mayors, local and national leaders and young people, in order to promote a culture of disaster risk reduction in all sectors of society. Education, in particular, plays an important role in shaping the attitudes of young citizens and bringing disaster risk knowledge to homes and communities.

34. An estimated 100 million children and young people are affected by disasters every year. The challenge for most countries is to build students' understanding of the causes, nature and effects of hazards through educational programmes while also fostering a range of competencies and skills to enable them to contribute proactively to the prevention and mitigation of disasters. Knowledge and skills must be informed by a framework of attitudes, dispositions and values that propel young people to act responsibly and responsively when their families and communities are threatened.[10]

35. The One Million Safe Schools and Hospitals initiative, through which the Strategy secretariat works with communities, civil society organizations, Governments and the private sector to make schools and hospitals safe from disasters, has received over 200,000 pledges for safety.

36. The momentum on the implementation of the safer hospitals initiatives continues to build, particularly in Arab States and countries in Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean. The revision of the key hospital safety assessment tool,

[9] See www.preventionweb.net/files/27624_pwevalfinalreportwithannexes.pdf.

[10] David Selby and Fumiyo Kagawa, *Disaster Risk Reduction in School Curricula: Case Studies from Thirty Countries* (Geneva and Paris, United Nations Children's Fund and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2012).

the Hospital Safety Index, was initiated by the World Health Organization and involves experts in structural and non-structural safety and preparedness from all over the world.

37. The role of parliamentarians is crucial in setting State policy and norms, oversight, legislation and the creation of an enabling environment for risk reduction. The Strategy secretariat has engaged with more than 900 parliamentarians from 124 countries, increasing their knowledge of and access to information on disaster risk reduction to support their work in the context of climate change and the Millennium Development Goals. In Bangladesh, disaster risk reduction and climate change have become an all-party agenda to support the Government in reducing climate risks. In Uganda, a new parliamentary network was launched in 2011 to support the efforts of the Government to reduce disaster risk and build resilience. At the regional level, disaster risk reduction and climate change are now on the agenda of subregional and regional parliamentary forums and assemblies. This includes the Environment and Tourism Commission of the Latin American Parliament; the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States-European Union Joint Parliamentary Assembly; the Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly; and the East African Legislative Assembly. The Strategy secretariat cooperates closely with the Inter-Parliamentary Union to encourage the development of national legal frameworks linking disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation and poverty reduction. Some 3,000 parliamentarians have received copies of their joint publication, entitled *Disaster Risk Reduction: An Instrument for Achieving the Millennium Development Goals*.

38. Over the past two years, the World Disaster Reduction Campaign on the theme "Making cities resilient: my city is getting ready" has developed into a vehicle for outreach and urban commitments that is growing in relevance and impact. More than 1,050 cities and local governments from more than 85 countries have joined the campaign since its launch. Many other cities participate in the global network of cities, mayors and partner organizations committed to improving participation, urban planning, local governance and urban risk by using the checklist of 10 essentials for making cities resilient, the Local Government Self-Assessment Tool and the *Handbook for Local Government Leaders*, launched by the Strategy secretariat in 2012. City administrations and local stakeholders can use these practical tools to apply holistic and innovative solutions to the new risks created by the growing urban population and complexity of cities.

39. Local governments have started consultations on a post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction. Several countries, including Argentina, Indonesia, Lebanon, the Philippines and Sweden, have undertaken initiatives to promote the technical and policy tools of the campaign nationwide at the local government level. In collaboration with partners and the 29 role model cities, the Strategy secretariat facilitated city-to-city learning and the sharing of experiences among local governments to promote the replication of successful community participation, risk-aware land use planning and improved preparedness. United Cities and Local Governments, CITYNET and ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability have adopted the campaign and the goal of urban resilience. The World Health Organization has initiated the development of guidance to countries and cities on urban health emergency risk management through the World Health Organization Centre for Health Development, based in Kobe, Japan, while the Capacity for Disaster Reduction Initiative developed a training package on advancing disaster risk reduction in urban settings for mayors and other local authorities. In support of

the campaign, the World Bank launched *Cities and Flooding: A Guide to Integrated Urban Flood Risk Management for the 21st Century* with the Strategy secretariat and the World Meteorological Organization and supported the development of the campaign tools.

40. On the International Day for Disaster Reduction, 13 October 2011, the Strategy secretariat and its partners invited children and young people to "step up for disaster risk reduction". It is estimated that every year 100 million young people are affected by disasters and thousands are killed and injured. Young people, such as scouts in Haiti, Red Crescent youth volunteers in Bangladesh and schoolchildren in Japan, are also at the centre of preparedness and response. There is ample evidence that wherever young people are supported and empowered with information and skills training, they are important actors in disaster risk reduction and have a keen eye for the areas in their community where risk can be reduced. The International Day was marked by more than 100 events in 80 countries, including an "adopt a tree" project involving schoolchildren in Kenya, earthquake simulations in Greece and a disaster risk reduction fair in the Dominican Republic. The theme of the International Day for Disaster Reduction in 2012 will be "Women and girls: the [in]visible force of resilience".

B. Strengthening regional level coordination

Africa

41. The African economy has shown substantial growth since 2000. While the rate of return on foreign investments today is higher in sub-Saharan Africa than in any other developing region, human development is the lowest globally and vulnerability to disasters is increasing. Drought, floods and cross-border conflict are the major challenges to disaster risk management. The upside is that Africa has shown political commitment by adopting and supporting the implementation of the Africa Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction (2006-2015) and the Programme of Action for its implementation.

42. Current efforts are focused on increasing the influence of regional institutions, such as the Intergovernmental Authority on Development. While donors continue to fund humanitarian interventions, longer-term solutions based on sound disaster management practices often appear elusive. While hurdles remain, however, progress is evident. The African Working Group on Disaster Risk Reduction is actively addressing the gap between climate scientists and policymakers by combining their efforts in order to improve early warning and increase weather and climate products for disaster risk practitioners.

43. The Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction will be held late in February 2013 back to back with the Africa Drought Adaptation Forum. The Regional Platform will address recommendations arising from the Declaration of the Second African Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction that were adopted at the Seventeenth African Union Summit, in 2011, on a financial mechanism for disaster risk reduction and increased investment in disaster reduction in the region.

Arab States

44. The Arab region continues to live through a wave of social and political change that is affecting governance and institutional structures, as well as the development and risk reduction agenda. Despite competing political and social priorities, the Arab Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction 2020 was adopted at the League of Arab States summit, held in Baghdad in March 2012, underscoring the political commitment and awareness of disaster risk reduction across the region. Efforts are now focused on the development of a framework to implement the Arab Strategy. Building technical capacity and enhancing knowledge and information systems are key priorities for the region.

45. The Gulf Cooperation Council's disaster management centre is enhancing subregional capacities and is focused on identifying the gaps and challenges facing Gulf States in mainstreaming disaster risk reduction.

46. The Arab Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction is planned for late 2012 or early 2013.

Asia and the Pacific

47. As Asian economies continues to grow rapidly, so does economic risk exposure to natural hazards. Disaster losses across the region amounted to $294 billion, or 75 per cent of the world's total economic losses, underscoring the high levels of exposure in Asia. Notwithstanding this increasing disaster exposure, many countries in the region have made considerable progress in reducing their vulnerability. Political commitment to addressing disaster risk is high across the region at both the national and local levels.

48. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)-United Nations Strategic Plan of Cooperation on Disaster Management, consistent with the resolutions of the General Assembly on cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, has been completed and will guide ASEAN-United Nations cooperation in disaster management in the region for 2011-2015.

49. The fifth Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction will be held in October 2012 in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. The Conference aims to increase political commitment and investment for local action in disaster risk reduction and establish a practical and collaborative mechanism for building resilience at the local level. At the subregional level, Pacific States and territories will hold the Pacific Platform for Disaster Risk Management in October 2012 in Nouméa, New Caledonia, to harmonize existing regional mechanisms for disaster risk management and climate change and support the implementation of regional policies and frameworks.

Europe

50. The continuing financial crisis across Europe has highlighted the economic benefits of prevention. As the risk of economic loss is now growing faster than the average GDP growth of European States, there has been a clear trend towards defining action to increase prevention investments by better understanding risks and integrating risk reduction across different sectors.

51. The second annual meeting of the European Forum for Disaster Risk Reduction focused on climate change adaptation, knowledge-sharing and the

promotion of citizens' awareness of disaster risk reduction. A key outcome of the meeting was the review of European countries' inclusion of disaster risk reduction in their climate change adaptation plans and policy. Strong European engagement in risk reduction and the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action has underpinned a desire to consult on a post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction.

52. At the third meeting of the European Forum for Disaster Risk Reduction, to be held in October 2012 in Dubrovnik, Croatia, the implementation of the outcomes of the second meeting will be reviewed.

The Americas

53. Population growth in the Americas is higher than the global average and continues to exert pressure on dynamic factors that increase people's exposure to natural hazards and creates conditions of vulnerability. This situation affects mid-size cities in particular. As most countries in the region reach middle-income levels and official development assistance (ODA) received decreases, competition for public resources among different sectors represents an opportunity to prioritize disaster risk reduction investments as a key aspect of sustainable development.

54. In the Americas, subregional organizations have played a critical role as active advocates for the adoption of policy commitments to advance disaster risk reduction through various mechanisms for cooperation. These mechanisms have been catalytic in the development of subregional plans and have influenced the development of new legislation, the inclusion of disaster risk reduction in national policies and the monitoring of regional advances in the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action.

55. The third session of the Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in the Americas, to be held in October 2012 in Buenos Aires, aims to contribute to the commitments made at the second session of the Regional Platform and address the challenges faced by national Governments and local communities.

C. Strengthening national level coordination

56. A review of national platforms and relevant national coordination mechanisms is currently under way and is expected to provide concrete recommendations to further strengthen national coordination capacities for disaster risk reduction. The regular use of the HFA Monitor by 133 countries to assess their progress has resulted in the accumulation of a valuable knowledge base on disaster risk reduction at the national level. The Strategy secretariat is currently finalizing a consolidated report of three cycles of reporting by countries on the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action.

57. In support of country-level programming, the United Nations Development Group held a series of regional workshops for 40 United Nations country teams, during which integrated approaches to integrating disaster risk reduction, environmental sustainability and climate change within country programmes were explored. A roster of disaster risk reduction experts was launched, providing United Nations country teams with a pool of staff across the United Nations system able to support country programming. The impact of these targeted interventions is, in part,

illustrated in the integration of disaster risk reduction, to varying degrees, in all 25 United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks[11] and one subregional programme document[12] that came into effect in 2012.

58. The United Nations Development Programme works in 60 high-risk countries on disaster risk reduction and recovery. Over the past five years, the average disaster risk reduction and recovery expenditure has been $150 million per year, of which more than 90 per cent has gone directly to national programmes. This figure is expected to double in the next five years. World Bank investments in country-level disaster risk reduction, through the Global Facility for Disaster Risk Reduction and Recovery, have increased from $0.6 million in fiscal year 2007 to $35.3 million in 2012.

IV. Increasing investments for disaster risk reduction

59. As highlighted in a recent study of the Geneva Association on insurance economics,[13] economic losses in 2011 were unprecedented and set a new record for insured economic losses of at least $105 billion. This is part of a trend of extreme disaster events becoming more costly. The disaster that occurred in Japan in March 2011 has demonstrated how vulnerable societies and economies are in the face of geophysical events, which have received less attention in recent years as the main focus has been on climate change. The earthquake that occurred in eastern Japan was also the first "natural" disaster leading to long-term policy changes in several countries far away from the affected region, such as the nuclear phase-out in Germany and Switzerland and the cancellation of all plans to build nuclear power plants in Italy.

60. Investments in disaster risk reduction by both national Governments and the international community are an effective means of protecting people and critical social infrastructure. Since the turn of the century, more than 2.2 billion people have been affected by natural hazards worldwide and economic losses have totalled almost $1 trillion, and yet independent research published in March 2012[14] found that less than 1 per cent of all ODA is invested in reducing disaster risk in countries most affected by disasters, including those with over half of the people affected by disasters worldwide and almost 80 per cent of the deaths. The lion's share of ODA funding for disaster risk reduction has gone into major infrastructure projects in just two countries. It is also evident that much disaster risk reduction funding is for operational preparedness rather than for building long-term resilience. The Strategy secretariat, working with Member States and the Development Assistance

[11] For Albania, Bangladesh, Central African Republic, Dominican Republic, Ethiopia, Guyana, Honduras, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, Kyrgyzstan, Malawi, Mauritania, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Senegal, Sao Tome and Principe, Suriname, Thailand, Ukraine, Yemen and Zimbabwe.

[12] For Barbados and the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States.

[13] Christophe Courbage and Walter R. Stahel, eds, "Extreme events and insurance: 2011 annus horribilis", The Geneva Reports: Risk and Insurance Research, No. 5 (Geneva, The Geneva Association, 2012).

[14] Jan Kellett and Dan Sparks, "Disaster risk reduction: spending where it should count", Briefing paper (Wells, Somerset, Global Humanitarian Assistance, 2012). Available from www.globalhumanitarianassistance.org/report/disaster-risk-reduction-spending-where-it-should-count.

Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, is developing tools to track spending by national Governments and the international community, with the aim of stimulating greater investment in disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation.

61. Disaster risk reduction was recognized as a key development issue at the Fourth High-level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, held in Busan, Republic of Korea. The outcome document reflected the need to ensure that development strategies and programmes prioritize the building of resilience among people and societies at risk from shocks, especially in highly vulnerable settings, such as small island developing States, and stated that investing in resilience and risk reduction increased the value and sustainability of development efforts. I welcome this commitment, which needs to be translated into action by Member States. The United Nations system will fully support their efforts.

62. The positioning of disaster risk management as a key topic of the agenda of the Group of 20 for 2012 is an important development. The Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery supported the Mexican Presidency of the Group of 20 to sensitize the Governments to the fiscal impact of disasters. The Group of 20 Summit held in Los Cabos, Mexico, in June 2012 resulted in a joint declaration in which the leaders of the Group of 20 recognized the value of disaster risk management tools and strategies to better prevent disasters, protect populations and assets and financially manage the economic impact of the disasters. They also recognized the combined efforts of the World Bank, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and the United Nations. A report on mitigating the financial impact of disasters, entitled "Improving the assessment of disaster risks to strengthen financial resilience" was published by the Government of Mexico and the World Bank as the first deliverable under the Group of 20 disaster risk management agenda.

Funding of the Strategy secretariat

63. Taking into account the need to continue advocacy and apply the practice of disaster risk reduction in the Millennium Development Goals and their successor and the processes associated with the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, the Strategy secretariat launched its strategic framework 2025[15] to realize its vision of a world where the social, political and economic imperatives for reducing disaster risk are acted on. The framework sets the Strategy secretariat's direction and outlines outcomes and targets until 2015. The Strategy secretariat's results-based management system will further enhance its ability to capture and communicate the impact of its advocacy, leadership and knowledge generation in support of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction.

64. In 2011, the General Assembly approved my proposal to include a Chief of Branch, Regional Programme and Policy Development, at the D-1 level in the programme budget for the biennium 2012-2013. The Chief of Branch will lead the planning and programming of the Strategy secretariat's regional work. I thank Member States for supporting this proposal and for thus recognizing the central importance to the United Nations of supporting States in reducing disaster losses.

[15] Available from www.unisdr.org/we/inform/publications/23291.

65. The Strategy secretariat has projected that its funding requirement target for the 2012-2013 biennium is $64.9 million. Funding from the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery to the Strategy secretariat will cease at the end of 2013, creating a significant gap in the resources that have thus far allowed the development of the secretariat's regional capacity for cooperation on disaster risk reduction. The grant has been critical in cementing the partnership between the World Bank and the Strategy secretariat and in supporting global advocacy, knowledge building and regional coordination of disaster risk reduction.

V. Conclusions and recommendations

66. The nature of risk and risk patterns is changing, owing to climate variability and development practices. The concentration of people and economic, social and cultural assets in disaster-prone areas continues. The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in June 2012, has pointed to the need to change unsustainable development patterns, invest in disaster risk reduction at all levels and ensure the integration of disaster risk reduction in future frameworks on sustainable development.

67. As work towards the definition of a post-2015 disaster risk reduction framework progresses, it is critical that Member States take stock of their experience and lessons learned in managing disaster risk and integrating disaster risk reduction into policies and plans for development and share them at the 2013 Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction. In this context, it is important to report on the implementation of the deliberations and commitments made at the previous sessions of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, in particular those concerning the assessment and safety of schools and hospitals and the conduct of multi-hazard risk assessments, as well as disaster risk reduction financing, namely the commitment to provide the equivalent of 10 per cent of humanitarian relief funds, 10 per cent of post-disaster reconstruction and recovery projects and national preparedness and response plans and 1 per cent of all national development funding and development assistance funding.

68. The fourth session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in 2013 represents a unique opportunity for Member States and all other stakeholders, including the private sector, to share the lessons learned and contribute to shaping the content of the post-2015 disaster risk reduction framework. As such, I invite countries to participate with senior-level representation from various sectors, in particular from planning and finance, as well as from the private sector, the sciences and civil society.

69. The lessons learned through such stocktaking will also be of strategic use during the discussions on the follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, including the definition of the sustainable development goals. In this context, it is important that the vision of how to manage disaster risk be coherently represented through all relevant sustainable development forums and processes and that, to this end, Member States develop coherent approaches built on accumulated practices and experience.

70. The next two years offer important opportunities to agree on practical approaches to addressing the challenges posed by climate variability and unsustainable development practices, which are vulnerable to natural hazards. The

work and cooperation in the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action has already generated a significant body of practice and experience from which some clear principles are emerging. The work for the development of a post-2015 disaster risk reduction framework and the Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction set the stage for transforming such accumulated experience and knowledge into new risk management paradigms.

71. In this respect, I have requested the Strategy secretariat, in its role as the United Nations system focal point for disaster risk reduction, to work with Japan, the host country, and to lead the preparations for that very important event.

72. **In the light of the above, I recommend that:**

(a) **Through national cross-sectoral and multi-stakeholder consultations, including local actors, Member States take stock of the lessons from managing disaster risk and securing development planning and investments and share those lessons at the fourth session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in 2013;**

(b) **Member States, through the above-mentioned consultations, prepare to share at the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in 2013 their progress on the implementation of the commitments undertaken at the sessions of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction held in 2007, 2009 and 2011, as outlined in the respective Chair's summaries;**

(c) **Member States actively engage in the consultation process for the development of a post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction, to be facilitated by the Strategy secretariat in accordance with General Assembly resolution 66/199;**

(d) **Member States establish and further develop national disaster loss databases, disaster risk mapping and financial tracking systems in order to support decision-making across all levels of Government, and that they make full use of the HFA Monitor in order to support the assessment of progress made in disaster risk reduction.**

73. **In addition, I urge that:**

(a) **Member States ensure that future frameworks and deliberations concerning sustainable development, including those at the regional level, be based on practical and sound disaster risk reduction considerations, drawn, inter alia, from the proposed national stocktaking exercises;**

(b) **Member States ensure resources to and support for the further strengthening of the Strategy secretariat so that the latter can meet the challenges of the coming work on sustainable development and the development of the post-2015 disaster risk reduction framework.**

Annex

Update on international cooperation to reduce the impact of El Niño/La Niña

1. The International Research Centre on El Niño, in Guayaquil, Ecuador, continues to be a reference centre on climate services and climate-related disaster risk reduction in the Andean region — the western coast of South America — and globally. Its main contributions are in the area of climate research, including support to applied studies through data collection and contributions to the periodic El Niño/La Niña updates coordinated by the World Meteorological Organization.

2. The Centre has developed a number of tools, including applied research in climate change and vulnerability assessments in highlands, coastal zones and marine-protected and urban areas. In support of its applied research efforts, the Centre coordinates three regional working groups on seasonal forecasts, hydrological outlooks and extreme events and climate indices. During the reporting period, training was provided to more than 250 professionals in the Americas on climate analysis, climate risk management, ocean modelling, hydrological outlooks, extreme events analysis and climate adaptation.

3. Collaboration continues to be an important focus of the Centre's work. It has established working relations with the International Research Institute for Climate and Society, the Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research, the African Centre of Meteorological Applications for Development, the Meteorological Research Institute (Japan), Universitat Rovira i Virgili (Spain), EUROCLIMA, the climate change regional cooperation programme of the European Commission, and national and regional organizations across the Americas.

4. As the Centre approaches a decade in operation, only two Member States — Ecuador and Spain — have provided funding.